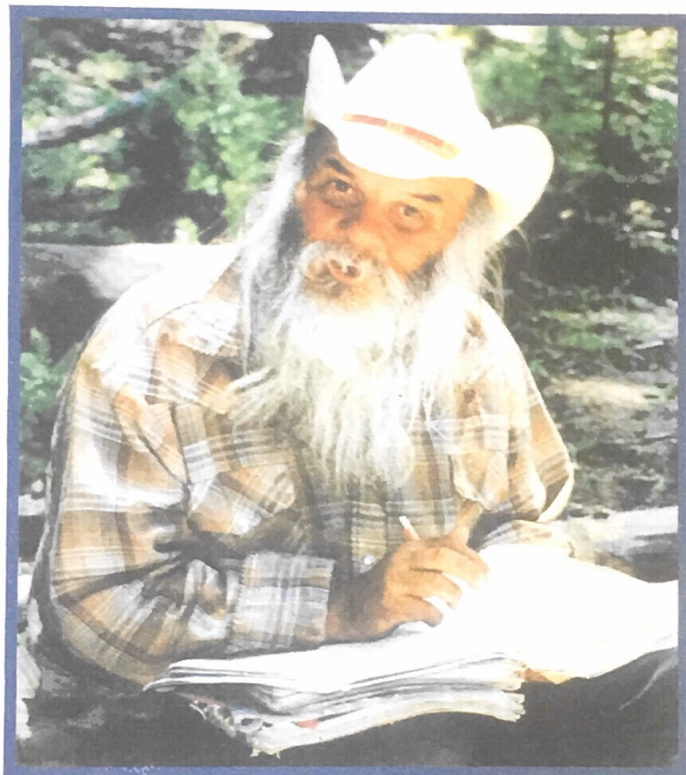


# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories



by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.

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13.H: ELIZABETH BABBLINGBROOK -  
"The PEOPLE HERE ARE MY CHILDREN"

4 pages

[13.H]



## Elizabeth Babblingbrook - The People Here Are My Children

[Harmony says, "Elizabeth is a catalyst. She connects people with each other at the Rainbow Co-op House - which is extremely important."]

My life has been unbelleverable from the time I first came into the world. I was one of those creatures that was never meant to live. My mother almost lost me when I was a baby. I weighed eight pounds when I was born and six months later I weighed nine pounds. My mother couldn't find the right formula for me. My grandmother put me on Eagle Brand Milk and I've been addicted to it ever since then, and I'm 47 now. I was born in Caruthersville, Missouri, in December, 1930. My grandmother owned the best boarding house there.

My mother and father celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in November, 1977. They have such a beautiful old-fashioned relationship, it's lovely to watch.

I started going away from home and staying for hours when I was five. I ran away when I was older.

My daddy started his law practice in 1938, just eight years after the Depression started. He had a hard time getting started, but he's still a lawyer today, 40 years later. My father has been city attorney of Blytheville, Arkansas, since I was a child, and city officials had a pass to the movies. All they had to pay was the tax. So all I had to pay was three cents tax to get in and I went every time the movies changed. You pay five times now what you did in World War II to go to the movies, and what do you get? Trash. The national culture has taken a step down.

I remember seeing a newsreel when I was in high school about what was happening to the youth in the cities. This was in World War II when the parents were all in the Army or in defense factories. The young people were allowed to run wild. No one was watching them. They were allowed to run in and out of the theaters. You young people are the children of that generation of youth. So I can relate to what's happening to you all even though I was raised in a stable family in a small town.

The war made a very big impact on me. I remember when the news of the Bataan Death March came out in the Commercial



Appeal from Memphis and all those men were killed, I cried and cried and cried. Because there were the names of men I knew in my hometown.

I married for the first time when I was 17 in 1948. I had been graduated from high school for three weeks. I was married 11 years. You don't realize it's a hassle until you've done it a long, long time and your nerves are strung out on end. I had a couple of abortions - they were very, very illegal then. I had a couple of miscarriages, plus four children and a child I had to give up because my husband didn't think it was his.

I became a very devout church goer. I became an intense Sunday School teacher of kindergarteners. I took special classes on how to deal with small children. I was very good at it because I had several of my own at home and I did it at Sunday School - and we all had fun. I raised some very fine children - none of whom have been in jail. They can't say that about their mother, though.

After I got divorced in 1959, I got married about a year and a half later. Each marriage is like each person - you can't base having a good marriage on what you've learned from the time before. It's a whole different trip with a whole different cast of characters. I didn't know that. I jumped in just as unprepared for marriage the second time as I had been the first.

My second marriage lasted five years. We married in 1961 and separated in 1966. I was still in Blytheville, Arkansas. The hippie thing didn't reach me when it was going on. I heard about it, sure. My eldest daughter was in her early teens and going through this horrible Beatles craze, but we lived in a small town and it just didn't touch us. I felt very sad to realize that my middle years had come and I wasn't going to have the experience of giving birth any more. That's a trip, man, Jeoz, that's a trip.

I changed my name. I changed my life style. I became my father's secretary. I was determined not to get married, not to get into that pitfall again. It didn't work out that way. My father owned the house where I lived, so he took over the house payments. He took over the gas and light bill and I paid the water and the telephone bill and I got \$35 a week in cash. I only had two kids at home by that time because the two middle boys went to live with



their dad in Colorado. I didn't have a car. I rode around on a bicycle.

I worked for my dad for six years. It wasn't until I met my present husband, who works for the University of Texas in Austin that I decided to leave my father's employ. I moved to Austin in 1972. I love Austin.

I've been separated since March, 1976, when my husband and I got busted for pot. I had one small take off a joint of a friend of my daughter's in 1968. Then after I moved to Austin, the man from the gas company came by to turn off the gas and he asked me if I'd ever smoked pot. I said no and he asked if I wanted to, and I said yes and next day he brought by four joints and I smoked all of it. I really enjoyed it. I would be overjoyed if my parents would smoke pot with me.

After the bust, I got out on bond. That whole farce was an embarrassment to the law from beginning to end. They expected me to have more pot than I had. And they didn't expect a stable middle-aged grandmother type lady. They put me on probation. They didn't fine me and I didn't have to pay court costs. Can you beat that?

I've never tried acid.

I moved away to Memphis from August 8, 1976, to June 23, 1977, when I went to Blytheville. I lived with my parents for the next six months until I nearly went out of my mind. Then I came back to Austin. I didn't have any money. I didn't have a place to stay. I just wanted to be in Austin. I heard about the Rainbow house on the street, almost as soon as I got back.

My ideas change from time to time. Sometimes I think I'd like to do this and so with the Rainbow House and then again I think it's not my place to do this and so. I never think of myself as a leader. There are too many chiefs and I think of myself as a pretty good Indian. I get too involved in power trips when I'm leadership. So I'd rather be about middle level and let someone else handle the leadership.

I've enjoyed it at Rainbow House up until what happened this morning with the pudding. It was delicious—but it was meant to be bread. I wasn't sure how I was carrying it off after the murder, how together I was. The more time goes on, the more I see that it's something in the past that life must go on in spite of.



I think that people here need a direction - someone to say, "Now this is the path - walk on that way." I feel like the Rainbow Family is just another phase I'm going through. Like Harmony would say - just another scene of the movie. I don't make any plans for my life. I have some hopes and some wishes, but I quit making plans. You get into trouble that way.

I can remember the names of about 100 people who have been at the Rainbow House. Every time I go to a party or a social gathering I can remember everyone's name in about an hour and a half.

My mother would be speechless if she could see the Rainbow House. My father would be thunderstruck. But the people here are all my children.

[At the Oregon Gathering, Elizabeth got to try acid for the first time.]